

**MINUTES**  
**MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**CONFERENCE CALL / SHANNON WILKERSON GYM**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.**

**MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mayor Ashley Brady

Councilman Joseph Frazier

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis

Councilman Ronald Atkinson

Councilman Ralph Atkinson\*\*

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt

Councilman Michael Baker

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Alan Ammons, City Administrator

Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk

Patricia Brown, City Treasurer

James Brogdon, City Attorney\*\*

\*\*Conference call\*\*

**1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY**

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ashley Brady.

**2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Ashley Brady led pledge and prayer.

**3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUESTS & PRESS – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY**

Mayor Ashley Brady welcomed all guest.

**4. APPROVE MINUTES –**

- Regular Meeting November 10, 2020
- Special Meeting November 17, 2020

***A motion was made by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier to approve the minutes for the Regular meeting and Special meeting. The motion carried.***

5. **NOVEMBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY**

Mayor Ashley Brady mentioned as always it's a pleasure to recognize the employee of the month. Last month we recognize the three gentlemen that jumped in and worked the trash truck. Tonight we recognize the employee of the month Ashley Allison in our Billing department. She handles all the billing that goes with AWS and make sure that we are paying our trash services, and what you all don't know is the stack of complaints of about three to four hundred complaints, she filed all those complaints. She's the young lady that is on the phone when someone calls City Hall to complain, fuss, and a lot of times they are not pleasant conversations. Mayor Ashley Brady stated that hopefully those phone calls will come to an end and maybe get them once a month or so. Hopefully the irate citizens are a thing of the past.

6. **DONATION OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT – MARION RESCUE SQUAD**

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that in the packets should be a copy of a title for a boat, locomotor and trailer. So what we would like to do; this is a 2000 model that we have had for the Fire department in Hurricane Matthew. When they were doing search and rescue they blew the engine. That boat has been to Allen's Marine in Florence, and the boat itself is in pretty good shape. It's a twenty year old boat and trailer, but to put a motor on that boat it's going to cost about forty five hundred dollars, and if you recall about a year ago we got new search and rescue boats (2 of them). There is really no need for this particular boat. So what I'd like to do rather than putting forty five hundred dollars in a boat motor that we don't need, because we do have the rubber boat and the flat bottom John boat. We would like to be able to donate this boat and motor (blown up motor) to the Rescue Squad, and let the Rescue Squad be able to provide provisions to stock the boat and motor and everything. So do I have a motion to donate this boat (blown motor) and trailer to the Rescue Squad and let them buy proceeds to furnish their other boat. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier.*** The motion carried.

7. **ENTERPRISE LEASE AGREEMENT – POLICE CARS**

Mayor Ashley Brady made mention that included in the packets on the desk is a copy of a lease for two new police cars. Remember in the past we decide rather purchase police cars it's more financially sound for us to lease them and you will see we want to lease two new Explorers. Now we are not wanting to lease them right now. We are just getting our name in the pot so come July we can take possession of them. One has a month's rental of \$750.77 and second one has lease payment of \$689.00 a month. You might ask why one is more than the other. We out fitted one car with all the lights package (the blue lights and everything like that). That's the \$750.00 payment. The \$689.00 is same car without all the lights package. That could be for the Chief, because he doesn't need all those light bars, and it just doesn't have all the light packages. That's the reason for the difference in the price. We are not saying buy them now. We just saying ok it so we can get our name on the list come July (next physical year) we can take possession of them. That's how backed up Ford is. Also we have an old Chevy Malibu car that Bobby Davis drive and the car is in pretty bad shape. What we would like to do is sell that car and whatever proceeds we get back from selling that car put towards the purchase cost. It's not a tremendous amount because that car is probably worth \$4,000.00 or \$5,000.00. If he gets in a high speed pursuit we'd have to put about 4 quarts of oil in it. It has to go to shop the next morning. We would like to sell that Malibu and put those proceeds to leasing of the two cars. ***A motion was made by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve our name to be put on the list to lease new police cars.*** The motion carried.

8. **READING ON ORDINANCE 20-14 AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE TEMPORARILY SUSPEND THE NORMAL OPERATING PROCEDURES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR AND ADMINSTRATOR TO DEVELOP AND ENACT A PLAN IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONTINUITY IN THE DELIVERY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK; AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO**

Mayor Ashley Brady made mention that item number eight is an extension of our Emergency Ordinance due to covid-19 as we have done on numerous occasions. Do we have a motion to extend the ordinance? ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker.*** The motion carried.

9. **1ST READING ORDINANCE 20-13 BUSINESS LICNESE ORDINANCE –  
STANDARDIZATION: NEW LAW, NEW ACTION**

Mayor Ashley Brady mentioned that basically what the state is wanting to do is have State uniformity on business license. So when a contractor in Columbia if he wants to buy a business license to come into Marion. He can log on and the pricing would be uniformity. There will be some revenue mutual changes. Mayor gave floor to Mr. Ammons to expound.

Mr. Ammons stated that this is something they have been working on for about three to four years now. The Legislator finally agreed on a plan. The Municipal Association has been working really hard in the cities. We should be revenue mutual. We will have some of the same because we are going from SIC to NASIC code. It's a little broader. Some may go up five dollars and some come down ten, but we should at the end of the day be revenue neutral. That's what the law says and that's exactly what we have to do. This is our first step to the process. It will be May 2022 when it will go into effect. So we are actually starting it off and they recommend everybody to have the ordinance and stuff in place because we will actually do our renewals in July 2021 the license will run out May 2022. Patricia and Ainsley have been working on it and getting it fine toothed. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker.*** A brief discussion took place. The motion carried.

10. **TREE COMISSION – STAGGERED TERMS, 4 YEAR, 3 YEAR, 2 YEAR**

- Corey Craig – Reappoint December 2020 for term to expire December 2023
- Robert McFarland - Reappoint December 2020 for term to expire December 2023
- Betty Eskridge - Reappoint December 2020 for term to expire December 2023

Mayor Ashley Brady mentioned we had Arbor Day the other day. We planted a couple new trees. Every year we plant trees and we planted two more Crepe Myrtle's and they commended us for being the "Tree City" for eight years, but we need to re-appoint the following; Corey Craig ( another three year term), Robert McFarland (another three year term), Betty Eskridge ( another three year term). ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker.*** A brief discussion took place. The motion carried.

**11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Update on Green Bulb project

Mr. Ammons made mention of Green Bulb that they were in and checking and are ninety five percent complete. Basically what they done was do a walk through. They made copies of our energy bills from July 2020 back to July 2019 to compare what they did back in 2018 when they surveyed the bills the first time. They will go back now and check the rates and make sure we are on the right rate and apply for the rebates like we should be getting now since everything's complete. Then in the next couple months we should be able to close it out. At some of our meetings (don't know if you noticed or not) our lights were kind of flipped sideways, and they re-did them and put metal bars on them so we got that taken care of.

Mr. Ammons stated that the other thing is you have a copy of the Holiday schedule.

The days the City will be closed and we also will be closed New Year's Day.

Mr. Ammons stated that in the opening of the buildings he recommends we stay like we are now because with the number of cases rising like they are we are just doing one rental a week.

**12. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE**

Attorney James Brogdon III made mention that he wanted to let everybody know that he been in contact with the crowd at CWS and we've talked about a few changes to the contract they proposed and what they've submitted, and he thinks we will get that

finalized. It's nothing major. Just wanted to let everyone know that we are working on that. We should have something done soon.

**13. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR**

**Mayor Ashley Brady:** Mayor Ashley Brady stated that as everyone is aware. This past Sunday we had a fantastic tree lighting ceremony. We actually had a lot more people than anticipated. The Christmas parade was a good success. You didn't see any floats in the Christmas parade because the float companies were not renting any floats this year. We had a great crowd on the Christmas parade. Tree lighting was good. Mayor said he was expecting fifty people, and it was off a little bit but not a whole lot. Everybody enjoyed the Christmas Tree lighting. The highlight of the evening was definitely the fantastic firework show. Mayor was at Tennis Court and it was a huge crowd there, down Bobby Gerald Parkway, but also in the field where the Volleyball nets are was a good crowd. He thinks it was the largest crowd we've had in a long time for the fireworks show. It's just a matter of folks wanting to get out and do something and that's a good way they can get out and do something; social distance, see the fireworks, and have a good evening. We had a good weekend with that. To top off our weekend the Marion Recreation 8U children, won the State Championship in soccer. If we were in a different time we would have all those children in here and recognizing them, but he wants to say thanks for the tremendous effort from our Recreation department and 8U kids. They were down in Beaufort and had a bunch of fantastic excited children. Also not just our smaller kids, but our Marion High School football team. AA Lower State Championship fantastic. Those guys played their hearts out came out and won the game, and played tremendously well. They were supposed to play Friday for the State Championship for AA, but one of the players had the covid and had to quarantine and they supposed to be playing on December 18 for State Championship AA. Hopefully everybody stays well and they can continue on and have another State Championship in a long time. Emerson probably was on the last team. Brief discussion was inserted here.

Mayor Ashley Brady made mention that you got to have tickets to go to that particular game, and thinks that they have limited the tickets to family members. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers on the 18th. They are in quarantine and my understanding they probably won't get to practice before that game. It's a challenge for those young men to not have practice for couple weeks but they play well and they will do well. Our employee Christmas Luncheon, we will have it again this year in the gym like we have done in the past. We are just going to put more tables and chairs out. We'll have hand sanitizer, mask required unless you are eating. For the buffet line we will have gloves. We are going to make it as safe as possible, and have a lot more tables so we can social distance. It's been a trying year but we still need to do something to recognize our employees to say thank you for what you are doing for us. It's been a difficult year. Give them a good hot lunch in this cold season, and recognize our employees for what they do.

This is going to be a popular place this week. Council meeting tonight, and this coming Friday 6 o'clock December 11th will be the swearing in for Police Chief Bobby Crawford here in the gym at 6 o'clock Friday. So if you can mark your calendars to be here. It's probably going to be the same crowd, about fifty or so. We got plenty of space that we can space out. We will have some light hors d'oeuvres, and congratulate and swear in our new Police Chief. Please mark your calendar. It won't last too long but I think we ought to be here and encourage Bobby on.

There is a blood drive this coming Thursday, and also they will do the covid antigen. (A brief discussion was inserted here)

We are still doing our Christmas boxes that we have done every year. Food Lion of course is our big sponsor, and a big help to us. Mayor Ashley Brady talked to the Manager at Food Lion and are preparing to do 100 food boxes like we have done in the past. If you want to make a contribution they can send it to City Hall and the money will be put to good use, and usually we will deliver food boxes and we get help from Council on Aging, DSS and whoever needs it. If anyone knows of anyone who needs it in

your church, or neighborhood that might need that food box. Please let Alan or myself know, because we want everyone to have a Merry Christmas. Think we will do it either that Monday or Tuesday 21st or 22nd of December for the distribution of food boxes.

Also would like to thank our Public Works publically. Those young men have worked hard the last couple nights during the winter time, getting the Christmas lights on Main Street perfected, and so hats off to the Public Works department for always making Marion look beautiful at Christmas. There is no other prettier small town at Christmas then Marion. Thank you to Public Works for what they do.

**Councilman Michael Baker:** Councilman Michael Baker did not have anything at the time.

**Councilman Joseph Frazier:** Councilman Joseph Frazier did not have anything at the time.

**Councilman Ronald Atkinson:** Councilman Ronald Atkinson stated that he hadn't been on Main Street but he heard they have been trimming trees.

Mayor Ashley Brady inserted that we contacted an Eric Healy. Eric Healy is an Arborist (landscape Architecture that's doing the project up at the museum). So we contacted him about two and a half months ago about trimming the live oak trees because he is a Certified Arborist, and he said we needed to wait until they go dormant. That canopy did need to be lifted because cars were hitting it, and couldn't open car doors without getting hit on Main Street.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson said it was dark also, and couldn't hardly see.

Mayor Ashley Brady said thank you for reminding me.

**Councilwoman Tassie Lewis:** Councilwoman Tassie Lewis stated that she just wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous year. Councilwoman said she was

looking at the flyer and the importance of the blood drive and it's very important to give because you never know who's going to need it.

The Coat Drive was very important the other day especially when you are giving to those in need. Also thanks to the entire Council for contributing. So it's not for just this past year, but the past three years that have made the Coat Drive a success. Councilwoman just wants to reiterate the thanks from the Coat Drive. This is our 3rd year. The theme is Rise Above it all, because if we pull together we can Rise Above it all. We were able to serve more than 500 coats and not to include hats and gloves that were donated to children in our community. Also want to thank Cliff and Frank for coming out and staying the entire time. Our big sponsors were Marion County Coordinating Council, and Anderson Brothers Bank. It could not have been done without those two, again thank you to everyone that contributed. Whether it be by financial, or just coming out to support. No donation was too big or too small.

Also want to thank Ainsley for sending out those letters for sponsorships, and she also sent them letters of thanks. Thanks is very important.

Its Councilwoman's prayer that everyone will have a very safe and prosperous New Year especially in light of covid. Prayer goes out to everyone who's struggling, sick or has passed from this deadly disease.

**Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt:** Just wants to congratulate Councilwoman on a success on the Coat Drive. He briefly spoke on his brother's illness and he survived it.

Mayor Brady reiterated that Emerson was thanking Tassie for the Coat Drive and talked about his brother and how he came through and doing well.

**Councilman Ralph Atkinson:** Councilman Ralph Atkinson made mention that he wanted to thank Mayor and Alan for everything they are doing in these trying times, and he does want to thank again the Public Works and all the other employees and Supervisors; Recreation Department (Supervisors) for what they are doing even in these trying times we still have to keep on living in these trying times. Councilman also said he is

appreciative and people he talk with in the community are appreciative of what they are doing.

**14. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- Legal - Contractual Matter

*A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to go into Executive Session for Contractual Matter.*

**15. POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS**

*A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to come out of Executive Session.* Mayor Ashley Brady stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker to adjourn.*

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Mayor Ashley Brady

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Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk